



News Release

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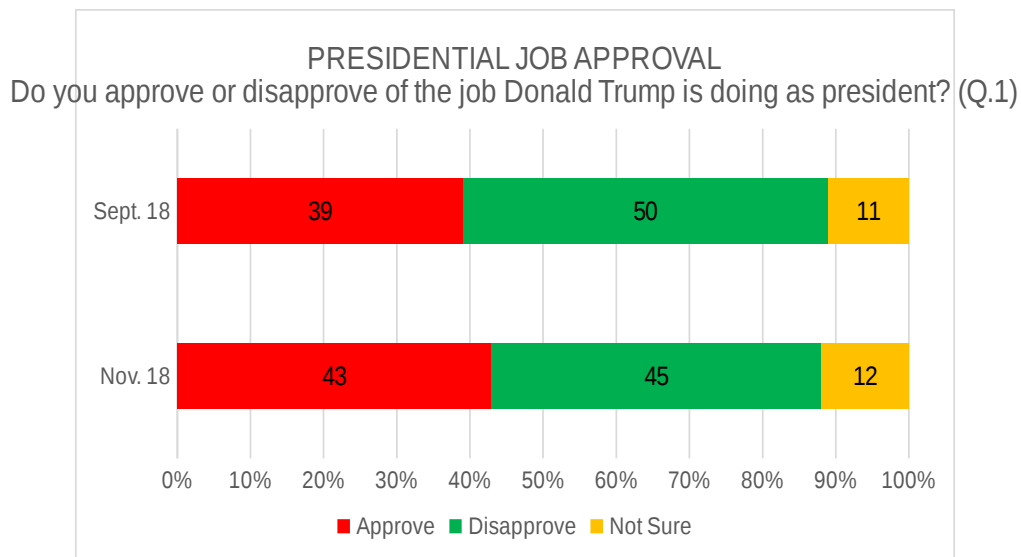
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The president's approval ticks up, but coalition is weakening

Grinnell College National Poll shows a troubled landscape for Trump in 2020

GRINNELL, Iowa – President Donald Trump's job approval rating has risen following the 2018 midterm elections, but that improved standing has not enhanced his chances at re-election in 2020, according to the Grinnell College National Poll. The poll, conducted by Selzer & Company, a nationally-renowned polling and research firm, shows the president's job approval rating increased four points (to 43% in November 2018) from the same survey taken 12 weeks earlier.

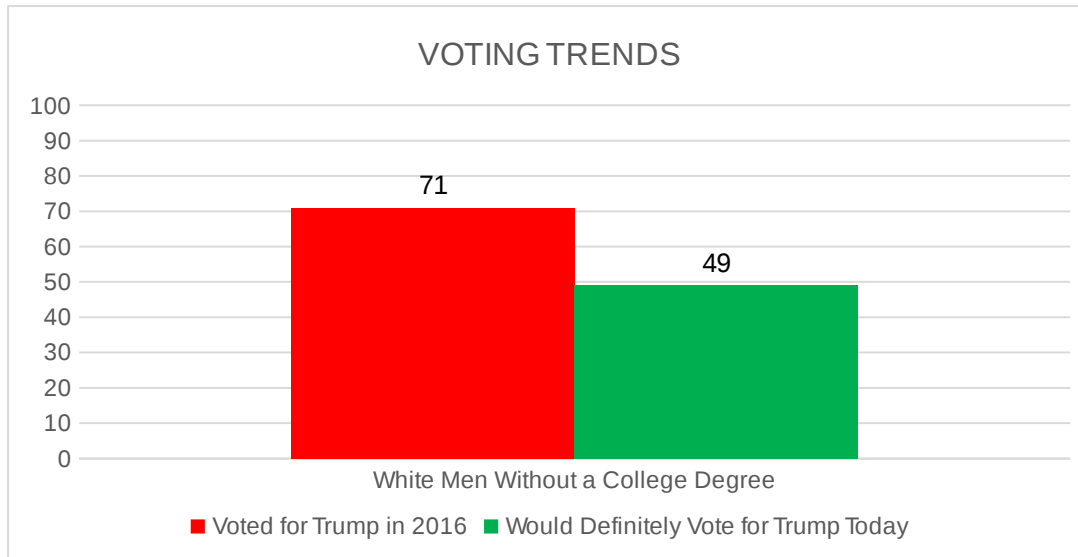


While his approval rating has risen, the poll shows that has not translated into future votes. Only 32 percent of those polled say they *would definitely vote to re-elect* Trump, which represents no real change from 12 weeks ago. Even among likely 2020 voters in the rural communities, where the president gets his highest marks demographically, just 51 percent say they *would definitely vote to re-elect*.

“The president’s approval rating has risen somewhat thanks to increased support among independent voters, but even a majority of those who are happy with his performance aren’t convinced he deserves a second term. The president continues to face a very challenging road to re-election in 2020,” said Peter Hanson, Professor of Political Science at Grinnell College.

Base strong but coalition weakening?

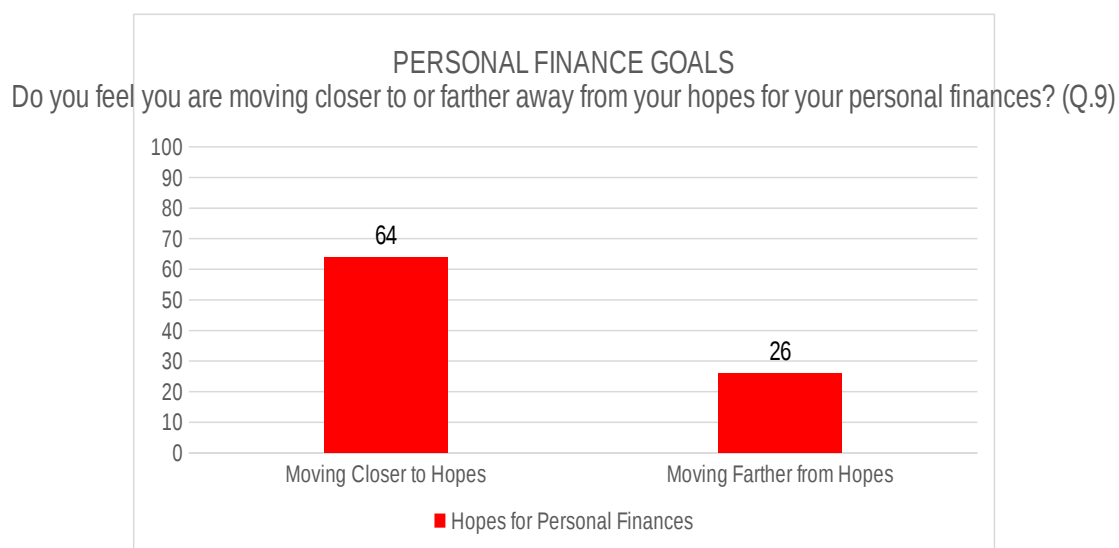
While President Trump has maintained the rural portion of his base, the broader coalition that helped elect him in 2016 shows signs of weakening. For instance, 71 percent of white men without college degrees voted for Trump in 2016, according to the exit polls. Today only 49 percent of that demographic would *definitely vote to re-elect* President Trump. Among likely 2020 voters he also falls short of a 50 percent majority of white men (43%), white men and women without a college degree (46%), and evangelicals (47%).



“Even when incumbents do not hit the 50 percent mark with the electorate saying they would definitely vote to re-elect, they would be looking for demographic pockets of strength where they carry the day,” said Poll Director J. Ann Selzer. “President Trump has one pocket only—voters who live in rural areas. He falls short with men, whites, those without a college education—all groups that handed him the win in 2016.”

Upbeat mood doesn't translate to re-election

Voters' skepticism toward re-electing President Trump comes even though the voters are feeling better about the economy. The Grinnell-Selzer poll shows two out of three respondents are feeling better about their personal financial futures. Sixty-four percent say they are moving closer to their hopes for their personal finances, while just 26 percent feel like they are moving farther away.



Professor Hanson notes the dichotomy between voters feeling positive and confident, yet unwilling to commit to vote for President Trump in 2020, is surprising.

“Historically, presidents who preside over periods of economic growth are popular and win re-election,” said Hanson. “President Trump’s low approval and dismal re-election numbers are a break from the past and may suggest that his combative style is harming his chance to win again in 2020.

The 2016 election appears to have convinced the president that he can win only by appealing to his base. That’s a miscalculation that cost the Republicans the House in 2018. The question for Republicans now is whether they can expand their coalition beyond this narrow base of support to be competitive again in 2020.”

Selzer concurs.

“This is the kind of poll that makes Republicans nervous, and Democrats optimistic,” said Selzer.

The second edition of the Grinnell College National Poll was conducted November 24-27, 2018 by Selzer & Company of Des Moines, Iowa. It surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults ages 18 and over, with a margin of error of the full sample at +/- 3.1 percentage points. Detailed poll information, including toplines and methodology, can be found at www.Grinnell.edu/poll.

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About Grinnell College

Grinnell College, a private liberal arts college in Iowa founded in 1846, provides individually advised learning for intellectually engaged students to produce graduates who are prepared to navigate the world's complexities and responsibly contribute to the common good. Grinnell enrolls 1,700 students from around the world, who earn B.A. degrees in a range of disciplines across the humanities, arts and sciences. Grinnell's rigorous academic program and campus life emphasize excellence in education through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas, a diverse community and social responsibility and action. More information about Grinnell College is available at www.grinnell.edu.

About Selzer & Company

Selzer & Company, a Des Moines-based company founded by J. Ann Selzer, Ph.D., is a nationally recognized, industry leading polling and audience research firm. Since 1994, Selzer & Company has worked with a wide variety of clients, including healthcare organizations, financial institutions, universities, advocacy groups and technology start-ups. More information about Selzer & Company is available at www.selzerco.com.

